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BAT MAN

MAN-BAT IS BACK!

...AND HE'S GOING TO GET YOU!

MORE NEW PAGES FROM THE NEW DC

C-682 COWAN & GIORDANO

BAT MAN
SKREEK SKREEK SKREEK
OH MY GOSH!
THERE REALLY IS A GHOST OF WAYNE MANOR!
FOR ONE TERRIBLE INSTANT, DR. TERRENCE THIRTEEN--THE MAN THEY CALL "THE GHOST BREAKER"--DOUBTS THE CONVICTIONS OF A LIFETIME. HERE IN THE SHADOWS OF THE ORIGINAL BATCAVE BENEATH WAYNE MANOR...

REQUIEM FOR A HERO

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BUT THEN, AS SHOCK RECEDES LIKE A WAVE, RECOGNITION COMES...

WHAT AM I SAYING? THAT'S NO GHOST-- IT'S THE MAN-BAT!

TRYING TO KILL THE BATMAN?

SKREEK

THIS SONAR GUN LED ME TO THE SECRET STAIRWAY DOWN TO THIS CAVE...

SKREEK

BUT I'VE GOT A BETTER USE FOR IT NOW!

WHAM

UNNH!

SKREEEK

THIRTEEN... UNDER-ESTIMATED THE MAN-BAT'S STRENGTH!

BUT EVEN THOUGH... THIRTEEN'S BLOW... BARELY DAZED HIM ...IT'S GIVEN ME A BREATHER...

CLUNK!

...BY DISTRACTING THE MAN-BAT'S ATTENTION AWAY FROM ME!

THIRTEEN'S SONAR GUN--!

THIS COULD BE THE KEY TO SURVIVAL-- FOR BOTH OF US!

SKREEEK SKREEEK

MAN-BAT'S GONE BERSERK --AND THIRTEEN'S TOO STUNNED TO DODGE ASIDE!

BUT IF THIS "GUN" WORKS THE WAY I THINK IT DOES--USING ULTRA-HIGH FREQUENCY SONAR PULSES--I CAN USE IT AS A WEAPON--

"--AGAINST LANGSTROM'S SOUND-SENSITIVE EARS!"

EEEEEEEEEE

SKREEK! HEAD HURTS! YOU HURT ME, BATMAN! SKREEK!

MUST-- SKREEK!--

--GET AWAY! SKREEEEK!

CLANG

LIKE A WOUNDED ANIMAL, THE CREATURE WHO WAS ONCE A SCIENTIST NAMED KIRK LANGSTROM FLEES FROM LIGHT TO SHADOW...

...AND HIS CRIES OF PAIN, ECHOING THROUGH THE BATCAVE, ARE ENOUGH TO REND A HEART OF STONE...

SKREEK SKREEK SKREEK SKREEK

KIRK SOUNDED TOTALLY INHUMAN--WAILING LIKE A LOST SOUL!

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT. I THOUGHT HE WAS IN CONTROL OF HIS MAN-BAT SELF...THAT HE'D BECOME A KIND OF SUPER-HERO!

WHAT COULD HAVE MADE HIM SEEK REFUGE HERE IN THE OLD BATCAVE UNDER WAYNE MANOR? WHAT'S CHANGED HIM?

NO TIME FOR ALL THAT NOW... THIRTEEN NEEDS HELP...!

GROAAN

OUTSIDE THE DARKENED MANSION...

WE'LL GIVE DR. THIRTEEN AND THE BATMAN FIVE MORE MINUTES, MS. CRUM --AND THEN I'M SENDING MY MEN IN.

TO PROTECT THEM FROM "GHOSTS," COMMISSIONER GORDON?

PLEASE BE SERIOUS.

WAYNE MANOR IS UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE GOTHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND AS THEIR REPRESENTATIVE, I'VE PERMITTED THIS SILLY "GHOST HUNT" PURELY OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE GOTHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT.

THAT RESPECT IS FADING FAST, COMMISSION--EH?

CALL A DOCTOR.

THIRTEEN'S BEEN INJURED.

OH--NO!

GOTHAM HOSPITAL, LIKE ALL INNER-CITY HOSPITALS HAS SEEN ITS SHARE OF MUGGING VICTIMS AND BAT-BIT BABIES...

...BUT UNTIL TONIGHT, IT'S NEVER TREATED ANYONE FOR A MAN-BAT ATTACK...

DR. THIRTEEN IS CONCUSSED, GENTLEMEN--BUT HIS VITAL SIGNS ARE STEADY, AND HIS EKG SHOWS NO SIGN OF BRAIN DAMAGE.

WE'RE CONFIDENT OF A FULL RECOVERY.

AND WHEN THIRTEEN REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS--

--WILL HE REVEAL THE SECRET OF THE BATCAVE UNDER WAYNE MANOR?

THANK HEAVENS THIRTEEN'S A BRAVE MAN--IF A LITTLE TOO DOGMATIC FOR MY TASTE.

WHAT HAPPENED AT WAYNE MANOR, BATMAN?

IF IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, COMMISSIONER--

--I'D RATHER NOT SAY.

WHAT THE--!

IT'S NOT "ALL RIGHT WITH ME," YOU BLASTED CAPED MENACE!

FIRST BRUCE WAYNE WON'T COOPERATE WITH MY INVESTIGATION--

--AND NOW YOU HOLD BACK!

I WON'T STAND FOR IT, DO YOU HEAR?

?

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CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

GORDON NEVER LOSES HIS TEMPER --BUT TODAY HE'S LOST IT TWICE!*

WHAT'S EATING HIM?

JIM... AS FRIEND TO FRIEND, YOU KNOW I'D NEVER REFUSE YOUR QUESTIONS-- WITHOUT REASON.

YOU'VE ALWAYS TRUSTED ME BEFORE--WHY NOT NOW?

*LAST ISSUE.--DICK.

GUESS I DID FLY OFF THE HANDLE, BATMAN.

YOU KNOW HOW HAMILTON HILL HAS BEEN RIDING ME IN THE MAYORAL CAMPAIGN.

THEN--THIS MORNING--THIS CAME IN THE MAIL.

wait Till HILL gets Elected -- you'll Get yours, PIG!

HILL'S BEEN USING YOU AS A SCAPEGOAT--BLAMING YOU FOR A RECENT INCREASE IN POLICE SHOOTINGS--

--HANGING HIS CAMPAIGN ON YOUR NECK--!

--JUST AS COUNCILMAN REEVES IS HANGING HIS CAMPAIGN ON YOURS.

THE MECA OF IT IS--I THINK HAMILTON HILL IS THE BETTER MAN.

HE'S BRIGHT, DEDICATED, IDEALISTIC--AND HE REALLY BELIEVES I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MY MEN'S MISTAKES.

AND, OF COURSE, HE'S RIGHT...

RIGHT OR WRONG, HE'S PEDALING HATE.

GOTHAM HOSPITAL

I ONLY HOPE HE AND REEVES DON'T TEAR THIS TOWN WIDE OPEN WITH THEIR POLITICAL GAMES.

GOTHAM CITY--LIKE ALL CITIES--IS A POWDER KEG COMMISSIONER.

AND ALL WE NEED IS ONE LUNATIC WITH A MATCH...!

CUT TO:

THE WAYNE FOUNDATION, EARLY THE NEXT MORNING...

:YAWN!:

SORRY, LUCIUS... I WAS UP LATE LAST NIGHT. :YAWN:

YOU WERE SAYING--?

IT'S THE BANK, MR. WAYNE. THEY'VE CALLED A MEETING OF THE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR FRIDAY MORNING.

EH? WHY?

I'M NOT SURE, BRUCE. I SPOKE TO THE HEAD OF THEIR TRUST DEPARTMENT--

--AND HE MENTIONED SOME KIND OF CLAIM ON FOUNDATION ASSETS BY A WOMAN NAMED PENELOPE IVY.

GOOD GOSH --POISON IVY!

SHE'S CARRYING THROUGH ON HER THREAT TO CLEAN OUT THE ASSETS OF THE WAYNE FOUNDATION!

HAVE TO TELL LUCIUS WHAT'S HAPPENED--MAKE PLANS TO STOP HER--!

LUCIUS, I-- ARRRK!

BRUCE!

SHOULD I CALL DR. DOUGLASS--?

N-NO...NO, I'M ALL RIGHT, LUCIUS...!

JUST...AN ATTACK OF ASTHMA...

"ASTHMA"?

BRUCE, YOU WORRY ME. COMING IN HERE EXHAUSTED EVERY MORNING...NOW, THIS ASTHMA THING... YOU'RE KILLING YOURSELF!

CAN'T YOU BACK OFF FOR A WHILE, LET ME HANDLE THINGS?

THANKS, MR. FOX, BUT THAT JUST ISN'T POSSIBLE RIGHT NOW.

CAN'T TELL HIM THE TRUTH...

...THAT POISON IVY PUT ME AND THE REST OF THE BOARD UNDER A POST-HYPNOTIC SPELL, PREVENTING US FROM SAYING A WORD ABOUT HER PLANS!

BUT I'VE GOT TO STOP HER-- SOMEHOW--

--OR I'LL BE WIPED OUT!

IT'S A MODEST BROWNSTONE IN A QUIET RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD; UNTIL RECENTLY, IT WAS HOME FOR THE CHIEF OF SURGERY AT GOTHAM HOSPITAL...

THREE WEEKS AGO, THE SURGEON MOVED WEST, AND THE HOUSE WAS SOLD.

THE BUYER, IT SEEMS, WAS THE GOTHAM "TOBACCONIST'S CLUB."

THE CURRENT TENANT IS THE CLUB'S FOUNDER, A MAN EVERYONE CALLS--

--"BOSS," BREAKFAST AND THE MORNING PAPER.

THANKS, SON. YOU DON'T KNOW HOW GOOD IT FEELS NOT TO BE EATING HOSPITAL FOOD ANYMORE.

THAT'S MAYBE THE WORST THING ABOUT THE MONTHS I SPENT UP AT ARKHAM ASYLUM...ALL THAT LOUSY FOO--

GOTHAM PRESIDE

HARRISON HILL LEADS IN EARLY POLLS

WHAT THE DEVIL IS THIS?

"BOSS" RUPERT THORNE, ONCE THE KINGPIN OF GOTHAM CITY POLITICS, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL UNTIL HIS FORCED "RETIREMENT" SOME MONTHS AGO...

"BOSS" RUPERT THORNE--IS A VERY ANGRY MAN:

DAMNATION!

THIS SAYS HILL HAS A TWO-POINT LEAD OVER ARTHUR REEVES!

SOMETHING LIKE THIS COULD RUIN ALL MY PLANS--MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THIS CITY'S POLITICAL MACHINE!

YOU WANT ME TO PHONE MANNING, BOSS?

DO THAT...

TELL HIM I WANT TO SEE *REEVES* HERE FRIDAY MORNING--FOR A LITTLE *POLITICAL POW-WOW!*

I WANT TO MAKE SURE THE *RIGHT MAN* WINS THIS ELECTION--

MY MAN!

SCOWLING, RUPERT THORNE GLANCES AT HIS REFLECTION, SEARCHING IT FOR SIGNS OF *WEAKNESS...*

...AND SEEING SOMETHING *OTHER* THAN WHAT HE'D FOR...

HUGO STRANGE!

CAN'T BE--YOU'RE NO *GHOST*--YOU'RE JUST AN *ILLUSION*--SOMETHING I DREAMED WHILE I WAS--*SICK!*

BUT ALL THAT'S IN THE *PAST!* I'M *WELL* NOW!

HOW CAN YOU STILL BE *HAUNTING* ME?

YOU'RE DEAD--

I KNOW BECAUSE I KILLED YOU!

RUPERT THORNE IS NOT A WEAK MAN.

WEAK MEN DON'T BECOME THE *BOSSES* OF BIG-CITY MACHINES.

YET, THERE WAS ONE *MOMENT* IN HIS LIFE WHEN *WEAKNESS* CLAIMED HIM--

--AND *BECAUSE* OF THAT MOMENT, HE ALMOST LOST HIS MIND.

NEVER AGAIN WILL HE LET THE WEAKNESS TAKE HIM.

THIS TIME, HE'LL MASTER HIS DREAMS--AND HIS NIGHTMARES--

--AND RUN THE RACE TO ITS END!

"CRIME ALLEY" USED TO BE ONE OF GOTHAM CITY'S MOST EXCLUSIVE DISTRICTS...BUT THAT WAS YEARS AGO, BEFORE THE AFTER-THEATER SHOOTING OF A PROMINANT SOCIALITE DOCTOR AND HIS WIFE BEGAN

BUT IT'S NO MISTAKE; A KNOCK ON A PAINT-PEELED DOOR BRINGS THE SOUND OF HESITANT FOOTSTEPS ON THE OTHER SIDE, AND BRUCE FINDS

MRS. LANGSTROM-- I'M HERE ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND

HOW COULD KIRK AND FRANCINE HAVE ENDED UP HERE?

MRS. LANGSTROM, I -- I KNOW WHERE YOUR HUSBAND IS.

I WAS HOPING I DON'T WANT TO

I WONDER IF ANYONE CAN

MOMMY.. I HEARD NOISES.

THAT'S RIGHT,

MY NAME IS

BRUCE WAYNE OF THE WAYNE FOUNDATION?

YOU FINANCE MEDICAL RESEARCH--TO MAYBE YOU CAN HELP KIRK!

I THINK I'VE BEEN ILL TERRIBLY ILL ALL THESE YEARS--SINCE THAT NIGHT AT THE GOTHAM MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

"...WHEN HIS STUDY OF NOCTURNAL MAMMALS [illegible] BAT-GLAND EXTRACT..."

[illegible] SELF."

[illegible] "BAT-MAN."

[illegible] HALF-BAT!"

"THE CHANGE ALMOST DROVE HIM INSANE... GRADUALLY, HE WAS LOSING TOUCH WITH HIS OWN HUMANITY, BECOMING MORE AND MORE BATLIKE..."

[illegible] THE BAT [illegible]

*ABRIDGED VERSION OF THE EVENTS IN [illegible]

FOR A WHILE, EVERYTHING SEEMED TO TO GO WELL

WE WERE *MARRIED*. FINALLY, AND WE MOVED TO *CHICAGO*, WHERE KIRK CONTINUED HIS STUDIES...

AND WHERE, EVENTUALLY, [illegible]

[illegible]

KIRK LEARNED HOW TO CONTROL HIS MAN-BAT TRANSFORMATION -

"--AND SO HE FULFILLED A *DREAM*, MODELING HIMSELF AFTER BATMAN AS A CRIME FIGHTER"

BUT THEN--

"--THE [illegible]"

[illegible]

EVEN AFTER REBECCA WAS CURED, THROUGH SUBCONSCIOUS [illegible] KIRK REMAINED [illegible]

FROM [illegible]

"--AND [illegible] TURNED TO *HATING* HIM

"AND THE BATMAN ASTONISHED THE ONLY WOMAN WHO MEANT [illegible]

[illegible]

FROM *GHOSTS* #42 *DC PRESENTS* #35--DICK

IT AFFECTED HIS [illegible]...AND IN SOME STRANGE WAY [illegible] HIS SOUL

M-MY GOD USED THE MORE PROPORTIONS IN THE BAT GLAND FORMULA !

HEAD'S ACHING... [illegible] SINCE THE FIRST TIME !

DARLING

[illegible] CHANGE [illegible]!

[illegible] SNAPPER!... I'VE GOT CONTROL!

HEAVEN'S SAKE-- [illegible] ANTIDOTE BATMAN DEVELOPED FOR YOU!

[illegible]!

[illegible]!

'[illegible] [illegible] TO [illegible]!

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

SO AM I FRANCINE. SO AM I

I'M AFRAID FOR HIM, MR. WAYNE ...SO TERRIBLY AFRAID!

EVEN WITH A FULL MOON PEERING DOWN ON GOTHAM AND ITS SUBURBS...

STAY HERE, KNIGHT, ALFRED.

I WANT YOU NEAR THE COMMUNICATOR -- IN CASE I NEED YOU.

I'VE PACKED THE EQUIPMENT YOU SPECIFIED, SIR.

BUT I'LL SEEM WORRIED.

"WORRIED" ISN'T THE WORD FOR WHAT I FEEL, OLD FRIEND.

I STILL HAVE THE ANTIDOTE I PREPARED FOR KIRK WHEN FIRST WE MET... I JUST PRAY I'LL HAVE A CHANCE TO USE IT.

GOOD NIGHT, SIR. GOOD HUNTING--

--AND GOOD LUCK.

OUTSIDE GOTHAM, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY WHERE WAYNE MANOR STANDS AS A REMINDER OF A MORE OPULENT ERA --

--A LINE OF HILLS RISE TO JOIN A RANGE THAT PLUNGES TOWARD GOTHAM, LIKE A DAGGER FROM THE NORTH.

IT IS TO THESE HILLS THAT THE BATMAN COMES TONIGHT.

FOR HERE LIES THE RUBBLE-CHOKED SECRET ENTRANCE [illegible] BEYOND, FURTHER ALONG THE HILLSIDE, A CREVICE OPENING UPON THE LARGER CAVE-STRUCTURE OF WHICH THE BATCAVE IS BUT A PART...

COMING HERE IS LIKE STEPPING BACK INTO A MEMORY.

MOST OF THESE CAVES ARE UNFAMILIAR TO ME--EVEN AS A BOY, I RARELY WENT FARTHER THAN A FEW HUNDRED YARDS--

ABOUT AS FAR AS YOU CAN WANDER ON A FAIR-SIZED BALL OF TWINE

WHEN I WAS CREATING THE BATCAVE--AND LATER, WHEN I EXPLORED AND SEALED OFF THE PASSAGES CONNECTED TO IT--

--I BEGAN TO REALIZE JUST HOW DEEPLY INTO THE HILLS THEY LED

BUT I NEVER HAD THE TIME OR INCLINATION TO PROBE THEM PROPERLY.

THAT WAS A MISTAKE.

LIKE THESE BATS --DESCENDANTS OF THE BAT THAT STARTLED ME ONE EVENING, AND GAVE ME A NAMESAKE--

--MAN-BAT COULD BE LURKING ANYWHERE, IN SOME HIDDEN NICHE, OR CLINGING TO SOME SHADOWED STALACTITE!

HE COULD COME SHRIEKING OUT OF THE DARKNESS --AT ANY MOMENT--

--AND IF HE STRUCK AT ME WHILE I WAS LEAPING A CREVICE, LIKE THIS--

STILL, WHAT OTHER CHOICE DO I HAVE BUT TO GO PROBING INTO EVERY DARK CORNER?

I MUST FIND HIM-- WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME!

THAT MAN-MONSTER!

GREAT SCOTT!

THAT STREAM MUST BE A SUBTERRANEAN TRIBUTARY TO THE *GOTHAM RIVER!*

I NEVER KNEW THERE WAS ANYTHING *LIKE* THIS SO CLOSE TO THE *BATCAVE!*

ALMOST SEEMS LIKE A *DREAM--*

THE EARTH HE'S COME

HE TURNS--

--AND IN THE SUDDEN LIGHT, MAN-BAT SCREAMS!

AAAIEEEEE!

BATMAN--! I HATE YOU!

BECAUSE OF YOU, MY DAUGHTER IS DEAD!

AND I AM-- MONSTER!

HE DOESN'T REMEMBER REBECCA WAS CURED--AND BLAMES ME FOR HER "DEATH"?

GRABBING MY LIGHT--!

SEE HOW [illegible] IT! STRIKE--!

BLACKNESS CLOSES ABOUT THEM LIKE A FIST.

[illegible] ANIMAL!

[illegible] NEEDS TREATMENT, MERCY--A HAND OFFERED TO HELP.

[illegible] TO ATTACK!

BLOWS THAT MUHAMMAD ALI.

CLAWED FINGERS TEAR AT THE CARED MANG EYES, AND HE BARELY PULLS AWAY.

--UNTIL, WITH STRENGTH STEELED BY EQUAL PARTS OF COMPASSION AND DETERM

HE'S ONLY STUNNED.

BETTER GET THIS ANTIDOTE INTO HIM FAST--

--BEFORE HE RECOVERS AND TRIES TO KILL ME!

THIS FORMULA TAKES ONLY A FEW SECONDS

SHOULD BE SHOWING RESULTS ANY MOMENT N--

THAK!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

HE SHOULD HAVE CHANGED BACK ALMOST INSTANTLY

DEAR LORD-- WHAT IF HE'S BECOME THE MAN-BAT PERMANENTLY?

THOSE STALAGMITES

--TO SOMER-SAULT--

--ASIDE!

WE MUST FIND OUR VICTORIES WHERE WE CAN

SOMETIMES SIMPLE SURVIVAL MUST BE ENOUGH!

BREAKING SURFACE

...RATHER, A CRY OF ANGUISH

NOPE.

CHILL OF THE HEART?

A CURE, LANGSTROM.

SO THAT YOU'LL KNOW - THE FUTURE STILL LIVES--

--AND YOU STILL HAVE HOPE.

AND WHEN I DO I'LL BRING YOU TO YOUR *DAUGHTER* - SO YOU CAN SEE HER, *HOLD* HER...

IN *DETECTIVE* 509 --THE CAT-MAN! AND IN *BATMAN* 343, GENE COLAN returns with-

I WOKE WITH THE WORLD'S WORST HEADACHE SLAMMING AT MY SKULL

BUDDY ROBIN BUDDY

ROBIN

WITH BLOOD RUSHING INTO MY HEAD... MAKING MY EARS ROAR, AND MY PULSE POUND HEAVY BEHIND MY EYES...I COULD BARELY MAKE OUT THE FACES OF THE HOODED CREEPS AROUND ME, IN THE FIRELIGHT...

HE STOLE MY HOOD AND CLOAK --TRIED TO SNEAK UP ON THE COVEN!

LUCKY YOU CAUGHT UP WITH [redacted]

NOW WE'LL BE ABLE TO SEND [redacted]

EVERYTHIN'S GOING TO WORK OUT JUST FINE!

[redacted]

TRUCKER WHO'D GIVEN DICK GRAYSON A LIFT...

SURE, I REMEMBERED [redacted] TURNED OUT TO BE MUCH MORE...

[redacted] UNTIL I SAW THE GIRL

[redacted]

SHE LOOKED LIKE A GHOST...SO FRIGHTENED, OR SO DRUGGED, SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON.

BUT I KNEW...THAT'S WHY I WAS HERE. I'D TRIED TO STOP IT, AND FAILED.

SUDDENLY I'M HEARING A CHANT AGAIN.

I HAD TO GO CLOSE

BA'AL ZEBUB, GOD OF FLIES!

BA'AL ZEBUL, LORD OF THE LOFTY DWELLING!

BEELZEBUB, CHIEF LIEUTENANT OF SATAN AMONG THE FALLEN ANGELS—

—I OFFER THIS SACRIFICE MADE IN YOUR UNHOLY NAME!

THE FLY WAS LOCKED IN THEIR DIET

...PRAYING MY PLAN WOULD WORK IN TIME...

INTERCEDE WITH THE DARK ONE OUR LORD AND MASTER!

I STARTED SWAYING, BACK AND FORTH, BUILDING UP MOMENTUM...

IT DID!

YEEOW!

IMPACT--
KNOCKING THE ROPES LOOSE AROUND MY WRISTS

ANOTHER SECOND TO USE THE ESCAPE ARTIST SKILL THE BATMAN "GH" ME--

AND I'M FREE!

I KEEP BACK!

I'LL HAVE THE BLADE - THE GIRL--!

YOU MEAN YOU *HAD* THEM, SHARKEY!

THAT'S *HISTORY!*

HE WENT DOWN, HIS CLOAK FLARING UP WHERE I'D HIT HIM WITH A TORCH.

THE OTHER "WITCHES" DREW BACK, STARTLED TO SEE THEIR LEADER *FALL!*

I GRABBED THE GIRL. HE RAN.

UP CLOSE, SHE WAS EVEN *MORE* PALE, THIN, *DREAMLIKE* ...SOMETHING ABOUT HER SENT A *CHILL* ICING DOWN MY SPINE...

I BETTER GET YOU TO A DOCTOR.

BUT FIRST--

-- WE SHOULD PUT SOME *DISTANCE* BETWEEN US AND THOSE *WEIRDOS.*

SHARKEY'S COMING AROUND... AND THAT GIVES ME AN *IDEA!*

CATCH THEM...

KILL THEM!

THAT SHARKEY KNEW HOW TO HATE, I'LL GIVE HIM THAT.

WHILE HE WAS GIVING ME A LIFT IN HIS TRUCK, HE TALKED NOTHING BUT HATE... HATE FOR OUTSIDERS, HATE FOR ANYONE WHO WAS DIFFERENT.

I COULD HAVE FELT SORRY FOR HIM: I COULD HAVE, IF I HADN'T SEEN WHAT HIS COVEN HAD DONE TO THIS GIRL...

I SAVE MY PITY FOR THE VICTIMS, NOT THE VICTIMIZERS.

IN THAT, BATMAN AND I ARE PRETTY MUCH ALIKE.

HAVE YOU FOUND THEM?

N-NO, MASTER... BUT THEIR TRAIL HEADS THIS WAY.

MASTER, YOUR ARM--SHOULDN'T IT BE TENDED TO--?

I CAN LOOK AFTER MYSELF.

YOU FIND THOSE SNOT-NOSED LITTLE PUNKS--

--OR TAKE THEIR PLACE!

...I SAW SOMETHING MOVE, OUT THERE, OFF THE PATH!

I SEE IT TOO...!

THE BOY'S CAPE!

TIED TO THIS LIMB?

BUT THAT MEANS--

RIGHT!

IT'S A TRAP!

WHAM

THUD

OKAY, KID. IT'S SAFE TO CLIMB DOWN.

THESE TWO JOKERS WERE THE ONLY "WITCHES" BETWEEN US AND OUR GOAL!

WITH THEM DOWN, AND THE *OTHERS* OUT SCOUTING THROUGH THE *WOODS*--

LET'S MOVE ON BEFORE THOSE *TORCHES* GET ANY CLOSER!

--WE'VE GOT A FAIR CHANCE TO *BEAT* SHARKEY TO IT!

I DON'T WANT TO TRY THE SAME TRAP *TWICE*...

THE MOON WAS STARTING TO SLIP BELOW THE TREES WHEN **SHARKEY** REACHED THE CLEARING WHERE HE'D PARKED HIS **TRUCK** ONLY AN HOUR OR TWO BEFORE...

CURSE THAT BOY!

CURSE EVERYONE!

BA'AL ZEBUB WILL MAKE THEM *PAY!*

SOMEDAY, HE'LL *ANSWER* OUR SUMMONS! I *KNOW* HE WILL!

THEN I'LL *SHOW* THE WORLD ...*TEACH* 'EM ALL A *LESSON*...

HUNTING FOR A RIDE, SHARKEY?

SORRY--

--BUT I DON'T TAKE PASSENGERS!

CHUNK

YOU! UNNH!

CAN'T LET YOU--GET AWAY--!

VRUMM

CURSE YOU--

VRUUM

CURSE YOU!

CURSE YOU AND THE WHOLE WORLD...

SHARKEY HATED A LOT OF PEOPLE, HIMSELF MOST OF ALL...

I WONDERED IF THERE WAS ANYONE HE LOVED.

SOMEHOW, I DOUBTED IT. HATE AND LOVE DON'T MIX ...WITHOUT ONE DESTROYING THE OTHER.

I WONDERED WHICH WOULD WIN OUT IN THE GIRL BESIDE ME, ONCE I GOT HER TO A HOSPITAL OR CLINIC.

MAYBE I'D BE THERE TO FIND OUT...

NEXT: MADHOUSE!